



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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August 28, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe  
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – TOUCH A LIFE  
FOUNDATION – TOUCH A LIFE I AND TOUCH A LIFE II GROUP  
HOMES**

We have completed a review of Touch A Life I and Touch A Life II Group Homes (Group Home or Agency) operated by Touch A Life Foundation. Each Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department.

The two Group Homes are each six-bed facilities, which provide care for boys ages 12-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Touch A Life I Group Home was providing services for three Probation children and Touch A Life II Group Home was providing services for four Probation children.

Touch A Life I Group Home is located in the Second District and Touch A Life II Group Home is located in the First District.

**Scope of Review**

The purpose of our review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. In addition, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, employee records, a facility inspection and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the

review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

### **Summary of Findings**

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Agency needs to address numerous deficient areas. Specifically, both Group Homes need to clean, repair or replace items throughout the Group Homes. Both Group Homes also need to include all members of the treatment team in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) and develop and maintain NSPs that are comprehensive and include short and long term goals. In addition, both Group Homes need to provide emancipation and vocational opportunities for all age-appropriate children and encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo album/life books.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

### **Review of Report**

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:JET:DC:AA:gfw

### **Attachments**

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer  
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS  
Ted Myers, Chief Deputy Director, DCFS  
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, DCFS  
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer  
Patrice White, President of the Board, Touch A Life Foundation  
Charles Wade, Executive Director, Touch A Life Foundation  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee

**Touch A Life Foundation  
Touch A Life I Group Home  
Los Angeles, California 90043  
License Number: 191803623  
Rate Classification Level: 9**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**Method of assessment – Observation**

**Comments:**

Touch A Life I Group Home is located in a residential community. Overall, the exterior of the Group Home is adequately maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped. However, the paint on the front porch is peeling.

Generally, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat, there is adequate furniture and lighting, and the Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the recliner in the living room is badly damaged. In bathroom one, the tub, shower doors and air vent are dirty and the caulking around the tub is damaged. In addition, there is spray painted writing on the window in bathroom two.

Overall, the children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The beds all have a full complement of linens and children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate. However, in bedroom one, an outlet cover is missing. In bedroom two, a bed frame is broken, a lamp is missing a shade and there is writing on the closet door. In bedroom three, there is writing on a wall and a large hole in another wall.

The Group Home maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

**Recommendations**

**1. Touch A Life Foundation management:**

- a. Repaint the front porch.**
- b. Replace the recliner.**

- c. Clean the tub, shower doors and bathroom air vent and re-caulk the tub in bathroom one.
- d. Clean or replace the window in bathroom two.
- e. Install an outlet cover in bedroom one.
- f. Replace the bed frame in bedroom two.
- g. Provide a lampshade for the lamp in bedroom two.
- h. Remove the writing on the closet door in bedroom two.
- i. Remove the writing from the wall in bedroom three.
- j. Repair the wall in bedroom three.

## **II. Program Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

### **Comments:**

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement. Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current. However, not all members of the treatment team are included in the development and implementation of the NSPs. In addition, the NSPs are not comprehensive and do not include short and long term goals.

## **Recommendations**

### **2. Touch A Life Foundation management:**

- a. Include all members of the treatment team in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.
- b. Develop and maintain Needs and Services Plans that are comprehensive and include short and long term goals.

**III. Educational and Emancipation Services****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews****Sample size: Two****Comments:**

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help and survival skills. However, children are not provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

**Recommendation**

3. Touch A Life Foundation management provide all age appropriate children with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs.

**IV. Recreation and Activities****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews****Sample size: Two****Comments:**

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest. The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

**Recommendation**

None.

**V. Psychotropic Medication****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents****Comments:**

According to the Agency's management, there are currently no children taking psychotropic medications. This information is appropriately documented and children are aware of their right to refuse medication.

**Recommendation**

None.

**VI. Personal Rights****Method of assessment – Interviews with children**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail and have private visitors. Children attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks. Children also receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

**Recommendation**

None.

**VII. Clothing and Allowance****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. However, children are not encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

**Recommendation**

4. Touch A Life Foundation management encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo album/life books.

**VIII. Personnel Background Checks**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents**

**Sample size: Five**

**Comments:**

The Group Home has obtained the required criminal and child abuse clearances for their employees.

**Recommendation**

**None.**

**Touch A Life Foundation  
Touch A Life II Group Home  
Pomona, California 91767  
License Number: 191500237  
Rate Classification Level: 9**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**Method of assessment – Observation**

**Comments:**

Touch A Life II Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is adequately maintained. The front and back yards are adequately landscaped. However, there is debris on the back yard patio and in the garage and the patio screen door is broken.

Generally, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat, there is adequate furniture and lighting, and the Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the cabinets are dirty and the counters are cracked and worn in the kitchen. In addition, the ceiling is water stained in the living and dining rooms, the shower is dirty in bathroom one, and the tub is dirty and the mirrors are damaged in bathroom two.

Overall, the children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The beds all have a full complement of linens and children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate. However, in bedroom one, there are holes in the wall and the closet door is broken. In bedroom two, the bed frames are broken and the walls and bed linen are dirty. In bedroom three, a dresser is broken, the walls are dirty and there is a hole in the closet wall.

The Group Home maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

**Recommendations**

**1. Touch A Life Foundation management:**

- a. Remove the debris from the patio and garage.**

- b. Repair the patio screen door.
- c. Clean the kitchen cabinets.
- d. Repair the kitchen counters.
- e. Repair the ceiling in the living and dining rooms.
- f. Clean the shower in bathroom one and the tub in bathroom two.
- g. Replace the mirrors in bathroom two.
- h. Repair the wall and the closet door in bedroom one and the closet wall in bedroom three.
- i. Replace the bed frames in bedroom two.
- j. Clean the walls in bedroom two and three.
- k. Ensure that each bed in bedroom two has clean bed linens.
- l. Replace the dresser in bedroom three.

## **II. Program Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement. Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current. However, not all members of the treatment team are included in the development and implementation of the NSPs. In addition, the NSPs are not comprehensive and do not include short and long term goals.

### **Recommendations**

#### **2. Touch A Life Foundation management:**

- a. Include all members of the treatment team in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.
- b. Develop and maintain Needs and Services Plans that are comprehensive and include short and long term goals.

### **III. Educational and Emancipation Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help and survival skills. However, children are not provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

**Recommendation**

3. Touch A Life Foundation management provide all age appropriate children with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs.

### **IV. Recreation and Activities**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest. The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

**Recommendation**

**None.**

**V. Psychotropic Medication****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents****Comments:**

According to the Agency's management, there are currently no children taking psychotropic medications. This information is appropriately documented and children are aware of their right to refuse medication.

**Recommendation**

None.

**VI. Personal Rights****Method of assessment – Interviews with children****Sample size: Two****Comments:**

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail and have private visitors. Children attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks. Children also receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

**Recommendation**

None.

**VII. Clothing and Allowance****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. However, children are not encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

**Recommendation**

- 4. Touch A Life Foundation management encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo album/life books.**

**VIII. Personnel Background Checks**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents**

**Sample size: Four**

**Comments:**

The Group Home has obtained the required criminal and child abuse clearances for their employees.

**Recommendation**

**None.**

Touch A Life Foundation CAP  
April 6, 2009

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**TOUCH A LIFE FOUNDATION**  
3822 W. 59<sup>th</sup> Place, Los Angeles, CA 90043  
1593 Densmore Street, Pomona, CA 91767  
(323) 295-4235 or (909) 626-3709  
(323) 295-0656 Fax  
touchalife@att.net

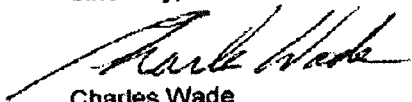
April 6, 2009

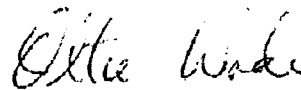
Greta F. Walters  
Group Home Auditor  
Department of Auditor-Controller  
World Trade Center  
350 South Figueroa Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90071

Dear Ms. Walters:

Per your request, attached is Touch A Life Foundation's revised corrective action plan (CAP) for the recommendations made in your letter dated March 31, 2009.

Sincerely,

  
Charles Wade  
Administrator/ Executive Director

  
Ottie Wade  
Administrator

Touch A Life Foundation CAP  
April 6, 2009

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**Touch A Life Foundation  
Touch A Life I Group Home  
Los Angeles, CA  
License Number: 191803623  
RCL: 9**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**1. Touch A Life management:**

- a. Repaint the front porch.**  
Current status – Implemented. The front porch has been re-painted.
- b. Remove the recliner.**  
Current status – Implemented. Recliner was removed and replaced with another chair and ottoman.
- c. Clean the tub, shower doors and bathroom air vent.**  
Current status – Implemented. The bathroom tub, shower doors and bathroom air vent have been cleaned and re-caulked.
- d. Clean or replace the bathroom window.**  
Current status – Implemented. The bathroom window has been cleaned.
- e. Install an outlet cover in bedroom one.**  
Current status – Implemented. The outlet cover has been replaced.
- f. Replace the bed frame in bedroom in bedroom two.**  
Current status – Implemented. A new bedroom frame was purchased.
- g. Provide a lampshade for the lamp in bedroom two**  
Current status – Implemented. The lamp was removed.
- h. Remove the writing on the closet in door in bedroom two.**  
Current status – Implemented. The closet door has been painted.
- i. Remove the writing from the wall in bedroom three.**  
Current status – Implemented. The entire room was painted.

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**j. Repair the wall in bedroom three.**

Current status – Implemented. Wall has been patched and the entire room painted.

*The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director along with Facility Managers are responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.*

**II. Program Services**

**2. Touch A Life management:**

**a. Include all treatment team members in the development and implementation of the Needs and Service Plans (NSPs).**

Current Status – Implemented in the counselor's daily notes, however will reflect in writing in the next Needs and Service Plan and Quarterly reports for each resident. The NSPs and Quarterly reports will incorporate feedback from the resident, Touch A Life staff (administrator, executive director, facility managers, and childcare workers), the Probation Officer, parents/ family members, California Health staff (drug and alcohol prevention program) and LAUSD teacher tutor.

**b. Maintain NSPs that are comprehensive and include short and long term goals**

Current Status - Implemented in the counselor's daily notes, however will reflect in writing in the next Needs and Service Plan and Quarterly reports for each resident. All NSPs and Quarterlies will be comprehensive and include short and long term goals for each resident. Parent counseling sessions will help develop short and long term goals. Counselor will encourage parents to be consistent with rules and guidelines when minors are home on weekend visits. All goals will be individualized, measurable and attainable.

*The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director along with Facility Managers are responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.*

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### **III. Educational and Emancipation Services**

#### **3. Touch a Life management provide all age appropriate children with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs.**

Current status – Implemented. Touch A Life Foundation administrator and Counselor participate with the Probation Officer to develop a Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) for each placed child. Facility Manager contacts the Independent Living Program for the Los Angeles and Pomona areas to place each resident on the waiting list. An Emancipation Preparation Goal Contract is also completed in conjunction with the Needs and Service Plan. For those students who are college bound, guidance is provided while in placement and continues when the youth is emancipated from the program.

*The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director along with Facility Managers are responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.*

### **VII. Clothing and Allowance**

#### **4. Touch A Life management encourages and assists children in creating and maintaining photo albums/ life books.**

Current Status - Implemented. Touch A Life staff does encourage and assist the children in creating and maintaining photo albums/ life books. Facility Managers will continue to copy important personal documents and place them in a designated "life book" folder for the minors to keep upon emancipation from the program. Disposable cameras will be purchased and available for use during outings and family visits.

*The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director along with Facility Managers are responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.*

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April 6, 2009

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**Touch A Life Foundation  
Touch A Life II Group Home  
Pomona, CA  
License Number: 191500237  
RCL: 9**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**1. Touch A Life management:**

- a. Remove the debris from the patio and garage.**  
Current status – Implemented. Some of the items are from the Los Angeles County Office of Education Title 1 program. A "Transfer of Items" has been requested but approval is pending before items can be taken to the Title 1 warehouse. Other items will be removed by the City of Pomona's bulky item pickup trucks.
- b. Repair the patio door.**  
Current status – Implemented. The patio screen door has been replaced.
- c. Clean the kitchen.**  
Current status – Partially implemented. Kitchen has been cleaned and disinfected and will be painted by 4/20/09
- d. Repair the kitchen counters**  
Current status – Not implemented. New counter top has been purchased is in the preparation stage and will be completed by 4/20/09
- e. Repair the ceiling in the living and dining rooms.**  
Current status – Not implemented. The stains in the ceiling are "old" stains. The roof was replaced last year. The ceiling will be repainted and repaired by 4/20/09.
- f. Clean the shower in bathroom one and the tub in bathroom two.**  
Current status – Implemented. Bathroom and tub were cleaned.
- g. Replace the mirrors in bathroom two.**  
Current status – Not implemented. New mirrors will be purchased and placed in bathroom two by 4/20/09

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Touch A Life Foundation CAP  
April 6, 2009

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**h. Repair the wall and the closet door in bedroom one and the closet wall in bedroom three.**

Current status – Partially implemented. The wall has been repaired. The closet door in bedroom one and closet wall in bedroom three will be repaired and painted by 4/20/09.

**i. Replace the bed frames in bedroom two.**

Current status – Implemented. New bedroom frames were purchased.

**j. Clean the walls in bedroom two and three.**

Current status – Implemented. The bedroom walls of bedroom two and three were cleaned. The room will be repainted by 4/20/09.

**k. Ensure that each bed has a set of clean linens.**

Current status – Implemented. The residents, supervised by staff, are responsible for washing their linens weekly.

**l. Replace the dresser in bedroom three.**

Current status – Not Implemented. A new dresser will be purchased by 4/20/09

*The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director along with Facility Managers are responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.*

**II. Program Services**

**2. Touch A Life management:**

**a. Include all treatment team members in the development and implementation of the NSPs.**

Current Status – Implemented in the counselor's daily notes, however will reflect in writing in the next Needs and Service Plan and Quarterly reports for each resident. The NSPs and Quarterly reports will incorporate feedback from the resident, Touch A Life staff (administrator, executive director, facility managers, and childcare workers), the Probation Officer, parents/ family members, California Health staff (drug and alcohol prevention program) and LAUSD teacher tutor.

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April 6, 2009

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**b. Maintain NSPs that are comprehensive and include short and long term goals**

Current Status - Implemented in the counselor's daily notes, however will reflect in writing in the next Needs and Service Plan and Quarterly reports for each resident. All NSPs and Quarterlies will be comprehensive and include short and long term goals for each resident. Parent counseling sessions will help develop short and long term goals. Counselor will encourage parents to be consistent with rules and guidelines when minors are home on weekend visits. All goals will be individualized, measurable and attainable.

*The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director along with Facility Managers are responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended*

**III. Educational and Emancipation Services**

**3. Touch A Life management provide children with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.**

Current status – Implemented. Touch A Life Foundation administrator and Counselor participate with the Probation Officer to develop a Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) for each placed child. Facility Manager contacts the Independent Living Program for the Los Angeles and Pomona areas to place each resident on the waiting list. An Emancipation Preparation Goal Contract is also completed in conjunction with the Needs and Service Plan. For those students who are college bound, guidance is provided while in placement and continues when the youth is emancipated from the program.

*The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director along with Facility Managers are responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended*

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April 6, 2009

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## **VII. Clothing and Allowance**

### **4. Touch A Life management encourages and assists children in creating and maintaining photo albums/ life books.**

Current Status - Implemented. Touch A Life staff does encourage and assist the children in creating and maintaining photo albums/ life books. Facility Managers will continue to copy important personal documents and place them in a designated "life book" folder for the minors to keep upon emancipation from the program. Disposable cameras will be purchased and available for use during outings and family visits.

*The Administrator is responsible for implementing the corrective actions. The Executive Director along with Facility Managers are responsible for monitoring to ensure that all corrective actions remain implemented and is working as intended.*

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